[TFR 251-1]

Foreigner's Fate

American POW's and MIA's must not
be an object of the political
state of affairs

Partisans convoy an injured
American flyer shot down in
the sky over Vietnam.

An analysis of archived documents allows us to draw the conclusion that since 1918 no fewer than 24,360 American POWs have been in our country's territory. An insignificant number of people (about 20) died within its boundaries (see the table for more specific information.) The overwhelming majority of them returned home successfully. But all the same the fate of a significant portion of the American POW's remains unknown even to this day. This, as a rule, is the category of persons, which, while carrying out government assignments and US business trips were cast into the Soviet Union as intelligence agents, saboteurs or were the crew members of shot-down spy planes. According to incomplete information, 40 people fall into this category including US army deserters (see doc. 1)

In my opinion, it would not be correct to create a US-Russian commission but rather an independent international commission to clear up the evidence on US citizens missing during the second World War and after. Such a commission must include representatives from all governments which participated in the wars during the period which we are looking at; the US, China, Vietnam, Korea, Thailand, Laos and Russia, as the legal successor the Soviet Union.

Years	Number of persons by country				
	USSR	Korea	Vietnam	Laos	Cambodia
1918-1920	more than 200*	-	-	-	-
1941-1945	111*	-	-	-	-
1945-1947	22,449**	-	-	-	-
1945	about 1600***	-	-	-	-
1950-1953	-	7190	-	-	-
1963-1973	-	-	1648	514	78
	No less than				
Totals:	24360	7190	1648	514	78

Table based on documents from TsAMO RF, GARF and RTsKhIDK.

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*captured in battle

**Liberated from German camps

***Liberated from Japanese camps

This would allow the fate of MIA's to be cleared up rather quickly. Of course, there should be several different search methods. I suggest that the time the one being searched for was last seen be used as a starting point. I don't only base this on my own personal experience, (though I've been researching the problems of POWs and internees in USSR and other government's histories for more than 20 years) but upon the analysis of the actions of the US-Russian commission. It seems to me that the work, despite several successes, nonetheless is deadlocked and needs its direction and its search plan corrected. This very opinion is held by the immediate members of the commission Lieutenant Colonel N. Troyan (The representative from the American side) and Colonel V. Mazur (the Russian representative).

I'll point out the basic shortcomings of the presently accepted search methods.

Firstly, the American side committed an error in handing over a list of MIAs (3752 persons) to the Russian side, in which, as it later turned out, more than 25% of the persons indicated had returned home after imprisonment and for various reasons weren't present. This lead to a frivolous loss of time by the Russian side and caused them to have a negative reaction.

Secondly, complete fundamental data on the one being searched for wasn't reported, even though it was well known that over seas there is a dossier with a photo and complete data on him and his family. It is unclear why such a necessary bank of information on US citizens has not been created to this day who for some reason or another turned out to be POWs, internees or convicts in Russian territory.

I want to relate a series of suggestions which are capable, in my view, of really stirring up the commission's activities.

It is expedient, for example, for the American side to compose a new list of MIAs based on their dossier with complete fundamental data, information about where and when the one being searched for was last seen by official persons (commanders, bosses, collages),the circumstances under which the serviceman was placed on the MIA list and his photo. The means of search for information and the places searched for information on POWs must be determined based on reliable data and not fantasy. Otherwise it will be a complete waste of time and energy.

Take as an example the US-Russian commission's 27 September 1993 report "The relocation of American Korean War POWs to the Soviet Union". Its text doesn't contain enough serious arguments to claim that about 600 american POWs were taken into Soviet territory. It's unclear what kind of reliable data backs up the information that american POWs

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American POWs at leisure.

[TFR 251-3]

were detained in Khabarovsk, Chita, Irkutsk and in Gulags. There really were US citizens in the latter, but they were convicted of espionage. Amongst them are **[redacted (b)(3)]**and others. This information is backed up by their criminal records and other documents which are located in the Russian historical document collection retention center.

Thus, having worked more than a year (a considerable length of time) the US-Russian commission still hadn't determined just how many US citizens are MIA today. A complete fundamental data bank has not been created to this day and so it is not known under which circumstances they were placed on the MIA list.

In 1992, at the commission's order, the Russian side handed over a document from the TsK KPSS archive on the agreement of quite a specific question from one FRG tourist firm "Ostturist". "Ostturist" requested that Aeroflot transfer 5000 people, from Hanoi via Moscow by chartered flights. It's possible that American POWs were in this number. However, it is still not clear if the latter were transferred by

"Ostturist" or not (see doc. 2)

The attitude toward the problem of searching for US MIAs from the US and Russian special service's side (and first and foremost the US as the more interested side) seems to me to be somewhat suspicious and even politicized. The US special service in the search for MIAs largely pursues the goal of establishing the former USSR's special service's character and establishing the results of its work relating to American POWs who wound up in USSR territory. This is absolutely understandable. But you see there are several different tasks before the commission, like finding out the fate of MIA US citizens without explaining which of them were recruited. The fact that a different relationship has formed between the United States and Russia than the one which existed between the US and the USSR testifies in favor of this stated opinion.

The paradox of the situation which has taken shape lies in that some people in America don't want to admit officially that at one time the US side treated the USSR with inimicable acts and even aggressive actions, like conducting active air and naval land reconnaissance actually violating of the inviolable USSR state border, sending out secret service agents and diversionary groups, etc. Would it not be better to rise above political and professional ambitions, to once and for all cast out everything that hinders establishing the fate of MIAs? The most accurate answer possible must be given US and Russian citizens, to whose families relatives and close friends did not return as the result of participating in previous wars, combat actions, etc. lets put ourselves in their sorrowful situation, let their anxiety and pain penetrate us, and let us help them.

[TFR 251-4]

Document 1

USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

At night from 2/8 to 3/8 this year **[redacted (b)(3)]** of the American armed forces, born 1927, from North Carolina, crossed over the demarcation line and presented himself to the Urfar city Soviet Military Komendatura.

At the komendatura, **[redacted (b)(3)]** stated that he didn't want to return home and requested that Soviet authorities in Austria grant him asylum, about which he wrote statement. **[redacted (b)(3)]** stated that he has been in the army since 1946 with short breaks in service. He served in the armed forces in Korea and was twice wounded. He arrived in Austria at the end of June 1953. In July he completed a month long force reconnaissance course

The military group special branch is conducting an interrogation

Il'ichev

3/8/1953

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Document 2

Secret

13 June [19]71

TsK KPSS

The Committee for State Security believes it possible to agree in principle with the proposal set forth in Comrade M.V. Zakharova's note about the transfer of a group of passengers from Hanoi via Moscow to Paris on chartered Aeroflot flights upon mediation of the FRG tourist firm "Ostturist".

As long as the entire operation includes the transfer of about 5000 people and it is possible to speak about organizing the transfer of American POWs, it will apparently be necessary to task the USSR MID to inform the MID DRV of the essence of the question and ascertain the Vietnamese Democratic Republic's government's point of view .

KGB Deputy Chairman V. Chebrikov

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